

Speak up & be heard

CONSUMER REGISTER lists summaries of major consumer proposals before Federal agencies. If you wish to submit written comments, include your name & address, state the name & *Federal Register* citation of the proposal on which you are commenting and explain your views briefly & clearly.

International food standards

On May 11 Food & Drug Administration (FDA) adopted procedures for review of international food standards recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

This commission is an agency of the United Nations with representatives from 90 countries, including the U.S. Its purpose is to standardize food regulations of the participating countries by reconciling, where possible, the different standards of these countries in order to promote international trade. Imports & exports among member countries can provide consumers in the various countries with a variety of foods.

FDA will review all Codex standards under a series of alternate procedures. A standard will be accepted without change, accepted with change or not accepted. In cases where the Codex standard for a particular food is not adopted because there is no need for a domestic standard & where the food is in compliance with the applicable provisions of U.S. law, there would be no bar to the food's entry into this country.

FDA will consider recommendations from consumer groups, industry, colleges & others during review of Codex standards.

Details—*Federal Register*: Oct. 5, 1972, page 21102; May 11, page 12396. CONSUMER REGISTER: Dec. 1, 1972.

Mobile homes

Housing & Urban Development Dept. (HUD) has decided in cases of Federally insured housing loans to permit used mobile home to be traded in as a downpayment on a new one. The old home's trade-in value (based on blue book ratings) must be at least equal to or greater than the minimum downpayment.

Until the new regulation became effective today, HUD required all downpayments to be in cash.

Whether a consumer makes a cash downpayment or trades in his used mobile home, HUD's definition of downpayment remains the same when the rest of the payment is a Federally insured loan: It must be at least 5% of the first \$6,000 of the total cost of the mobile home plus 10% of the excess over \$6,000.

Two consumers commented on the proposal. Two other comments came from mobile home companies, & one came from a trade association.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 3, page 17717; Dec. 14, 1972, page 26620; CONSUMER REGISTER: Jan. 1, 1973.

PCBs

Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has issued final regulations restricting the use of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in production of foods, food packaging & animal feeds.

PCBs are industrial chemicals that are used widely in food manufacturing plants in the heat-treating process that destroys bacteria. Occasionally, as result of industrial accidents & widespread existence in the environment, PCBs appear in food itself. First developed in 1929, these chemicals are also used as ingredients in a broad range of products—including paints, plastics, resins, inks, waxes, adhesives, rubber, asphalt & various building materials—causing them to be present in the environment itself on a consistent basis.

FDA's move to limit PCBs is based on results of tests made on animals, showing that the subjects sustained liver damage after being exposed to high concentrations of PCBs in their diet.

Although possible adverse effects to humans of low level, long term exposure are not known, the FDA regulations take the precautionary measure of banning the use of PCBs in plants that manufacture or process food, food-packaging materials or animal feed.

The regulations also establish temporary levels that are acceptable for the appearance of PCBs in animal feeds, in certain foods & in paper packaging for food. Such appearance is considered unavoidable because PCBs are so pervasively present in the environment.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 6, page 18096. CONSUMER REGISTER: April 15, 1972; June 1, 1972; June 15, 1972.

Smoking on planes

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has withdrawn its proposal to regulate cigarette, cigar & pipe smoking on planes operated by airlines, air travel clubs & other commercial operators.

FAA received 3600 comments on its proposal. These comments included medical evidence & environmental considerations both for & against the proposal.

In withdrawing its proposal, FAA noted that Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) already requires domestic airlines to provide designated "no-smoking" areas on planes. Details—*Federal Register*: July 17, page 19048; March 25, 1970.

Bockwurst

Aug. 17 is deadline for comments on Agriculture Dept.'s proposal of a standard of identity for a product usually called Bockwurst.

The standard would describe the distinguishing characteristics that the product must meet to continue to be called Bockwurst. Agriculture's proposed standard is based (1) on the nonstandardized product that has traditionally been made with certain ingredients in customary amounts & (2) on current industry practices.

The following are the major points in Agriculture's proposed standard:

- Bockwurst would have to be an uncured, cooked or uncooked meat food product in a casing that contains meat, milk, eggs & vegetables & any of the following optional ingredients—water, pork fat; fresh or dehydrated celery; spices; flavorings; salt; corn syrup solids, corn syrup or glucose syrup with a maximum limit of 2%, individually or collectively, calculated on a dry basis; autolyzed yeast extract; hydrolyzed plant protein; milk protein hydrolysate; monosodium glutamate; Sucrose or Dextrose sugar;

- Meat would have to be not less than 70% of the total weight of the uncooked product & consist of pork or a mixture of pork, veal & beef—either fresh or frozen;

- Milk may be fresh, whole milk or nonfat dry milk or both;

- Vegetables would have to be onions, chives, parsley & leeks alone or in any combination.

Details—*Federal Register*: June 14, page 15628. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250. Comments should refer to the date & page of the *Federal Register* cited here.

Duck standards

Aug. 6 is deadline for comments on Agriculture Dept.'s proposal to change the Grade A standard for ducks & to set Grade A standard for turkeys to be used in making turkey rolls, roasts & filets.

The proposed duck regulation would permit ducks that qualify for the U.S. Grade A identification to have wings removed at the second joint. Present Grade A duck standards do not permit clipped wings.

Agriculture says the modification of the standard is needed because sometimes wings are accidentally cut in processing, leaving an unattractive carcass—one wing in place & part or all of the other wing missing. Agriculture considers it better to permit both wings to be clipped intentionally in processing rather than permit unattractive clipped-wing ducks to be sold in food stores.

The department says the meat yield would not be appreciably affected by clipping the wings because there is little meat on the lower portion of wings of waterfowl. (Present regulations for processed geese already permit clipped wings.)

The proposed standard for turkeys intended for further processing would emphasize quality of the meat, not the appearance of the whole turkey. The Grade A standard for turkeys for direct consumer use emphasizes both meat quality & appearance.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 6, page 18032. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250.

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